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TITLE: Youth 97: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Data on an Easy-to-Use CD-ROM

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ISSUE: Health and education officials need quick and easy access to data on the prevalence of HIV-related risk behaviors among adolescents to target and design effective HIV prevention policies and programs.

SETTING: State and local health and education agencies, schools of public health, and community planning groups.

PROJECT: To provide quick and easy access to data on the prevalence of HIV-related risk behaviors among adolescents, CDC developed Youth 97, an easy-to-use CD-ROM program that provides access to five years of Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) data. The CD-ROM contains data from the 33 state surveys, 3 territorial surveys, and 17 local surveys, plus data from the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Users can produce graphs and tables describing the prevalence of health risk behaviors, trends in those behaviors over time, and subgroup differences. Statistical experience is not required. Youth 97 also includes video presentations of state and local officials discussing how they have used YRBSS data to develop programs, request funding, and stimulate community collaboration. Youth 97 is distributed at no cost by CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health.

RESULTS: Since November 1998 when Youth 97 was released, over 4200 copies have been distributed. States and local officials have used the CD-ROM to help improve health-related policies and programs for youth. One state sent a copy to every member of the state school board and every school district. Another state is using Youth 97 in high school math class to teach analysis techniques, while reinforcing important health messages about the actual prevalence of health risk behaviors. Community planning groups are using the CD-ROM to access data for targeting HIV prevention programs.

LESSONS LEARNED: National surveillance systems produce valuable data for improving state and local policies and programs. However, health and education officials need help accessing data in a user-friendly manner. Free distribution of the CD-ROM has stimulated wide spread use and greater application of YRBSS data.

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